

Message Text

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ACTION CU-04

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRUSSELS 0909

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY RICHARDSON FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL

SUBJECT: BICENTENNIAL PLANNING

REF: STATE 021483

1. MANY THANKS FOR YOUR INTEREST IN OUR PLANS. THE ASSOCIATION BELGO-AMERICAINE IS CONTACTING THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA. GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF BALLET IN THIS COUNTRY, I WOULD APPRECIATE ANY HELP YOU CAN GIVE US IN OBTAINING THE VISIT OF A TOPFLIGHT COMPANY. IF THE NEW YORK CITY PROVES UNAVAILABLE, PERHAPS THE AMERICAN BALLET THEATER OR EVEN A SMALLER GROUP, SUCH AS THE ALVIN AILEY COMPANY, COULD PARTICIPATE IN OUR BELGIAN UNDERTAKING. WE ARE MUCH DEPENDENT ON YOUR HELP IN THIS REGARD.

2. A FRIEND IN THE KING'S CLOSEST ENTOURAGE (A FORMER DEPT. GRANTEE, WHO IS PERSONALLY INTERESTED IN THE BELGIAN OBSERVANCE OF THE U.S. BICENTENNIAL) HAS SUGGESTED THAT A BOW TO BELGIUM AND TO THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KING'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE COULD EFFECTIVELY BE INCORPORATED IN OUR PROJECT, IN THE FORM OF AN EXHIBITION OF BELGIAN MASTERPIECES IN AMERICAN COLLECTIONS. THIS WOULD BALANCE AN EXHIBITION OF AMERICAN ART, MUCH OF WHICH WE HOPE TO BORROW FROM BELGIAN AND EUROPEAN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

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COLLECTIONS. MANY OF THESE BELGIAN (MOSTLY FLEMISH)

WORKS, SUCH AS THE MERODE ALTAR NOW IN THE CLOISTERS,
HAVE NEVER BEEN SEEN BY THIS GENERATION OF BELGIANS.
OUR SHOWING THEM HERE ON OUR OWN "BIRTHDAY" WOULD
SPEAK OF THE UNITY OF WESTERN CULTURE AND OF THE
AMERICAN APPRECIATION FOR OUR EUROPEAN HERITAGE -
IDEAS QUITE RELEVANT NOT ONLY TO THE BICENTENNIAL BUT
TO OUR CURRENT FOREIGN POLICY AS WELL. FOR THIS
REASON (APART FROM THE PRACTICAL USEFULNESS OF
ASSOCIATING THE KING TO OUR BICENTENNIAL EFFORT), I
AM ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THIS IDEA. THE QUESTION IS HOW
TO GO ABOUT IMPLEMENTING IT. WOULD THE SMITHSONIAN BE
THE BEST CHANNEL? AND IF SO, COULD YOU OPEN THE DOOR
FOR ME THERE? I WILL BE MOST GRATEFUL FOR YOUR HELP
AND ADVICE. STRAUZ-HUPE

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